

Need a reason to celebrate? You'll find it in Indiana.

By Sally Campbell Grout

Whether we're remembering a local legend or celebrating our heritage, admiring fine handiwork or simply enjoying an excuse to pig out, the people of Indiana never run out of reasons to throw a party. These fun-filled festivals are just a few that fill the Indiana calendar:

**Cranking up the action.**

Ordinarily, the town of Madison (800-559-2956), with its architecture, wineries, and bed and breakfasts, is a place for leisurely strolls and lazy afternoons. But if you're in town July 1-3, 2005 for the Madison Regatta (812-265-5000), you'll find that speed is the name of the game. The 200-plus miles per hour unlimited hydroplane racing action is the highlight of the weekend, but other activities include vintage boat exhibitions, fireworks, air shows, and music. And while the races take place July 1-3, the days leading up to them are also filled with activities, including a bed race, pageants, and a street dance.

**Move over, Miss America. Here comes Mr. Pierogi.**

A dumpling-like delight that hails from Eastern Europe, the pierogi can offer several different fillings, such as cheese, sauerkraut, and potato. But it's been the inspiration for only one festival that we know of: the fabulous Pierogi Fest (877-659-0292) in Whiting, July 29-31, 2005. In fact, even the Food Network deemed Pierogi Fest worthy of a profile, and in 2004 sent a crew to cover the event for its "Great American Food Festivals." But despite national acclaim, Pierogi Fest continues to embrace homespun charm. Activities include polka music, Slovak sing-alongs, pierogi eating and tossing contests, an art show, "Eastern Block Jeopardy," a beer garden, international dancers, and of course, Mr. Pierogi, looking dapper in "dough."

**An All-American favorite.**

When the name of your town is Frankfort, it's only natural that you throw a festival in honor of the frankfurter--or, as most of us call it, the hot dog. The Frankfort Hot Dog Festival (765-654-4081), which takes place July 29-31, 2005, features fun activities such as the Great Wiener Cook-off, arts and crafts, a hot dog eating contest, three-on-three tournaments, a car show, entertainment, a flea market, and a Bun Run. The Frankfort Hot Dog Festival has also been profiled on the Food Network.

**Here, everyone looks good in Lederhosen.**

It doesn't matter if you're German or not when you visit Jasper—especially if you time your trip from August 4-7, 2005. During Jasper

Strassenfest (812-482-6866), everyone gets into the German spirit. Approximately 14,000 people live in Jasper, and many of those residents have German heritage. Jasper Strassenfest, a family-oriented street festival, celebrates that heritage with German music, rides, games, dancing, a 5k run/walk and plenty of other fun. And what German festival would be complete without German food? Fill your mouth with these yummy goodies, and you'll have an excuse for mispronouncing them: bratwurst, schweinburger, apfelstrudel, and schwarzwaelder kirschtorte. Grownups will enjoy the Bier Garten, while those under 21 are welcome to the Root Bier Garten.

#### **A traditional Pow Wow.**

Throughout Indiana, you'll find reminders of the Native Americans who called this land home. You'll find a living celebration of some of those people and their traditions at the Mihsihkinaahkwa Pow Wow (260-244-7843) in Columbia City August 12-14, 2005. Here, in the birthplace of the great Miami Chief Mihsihkinaahkwa, or Little Turtle, Native Americans come together to share traditions with each other and with people who attend the event. Scheduled activities include dancing, native crafts, storytelling, and a children's area. During this traditional pow wow, you'll be asked to respect the dance area as a holy place.

#### **So many grapes, so much fun.**

What better place than Switzerland County (or, more specifically, the town of Vevay) to host the Swiss Wine Festival (800-435-5688) August 25-28, 2005? Be prepared to get your feet a little mushy; grape stomping is on the agenda. Other highlights of this festival honoring the area's heritage include arts and crafts, a wine pavilion, food, amusement rides, fireworks, riverboat cruises, and a grand parade.

#### **Have fun; help others.**

At the Julian Center's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Amish Country Market in Noblesville (317-941-2206, ext. 230), which takes place August 27, 2005, you can stroll the booths featuring juried handcrafted arts and crafts. Or, you may want to shop for antiques, sample the food, bid at the auction, listen to the music, watch your kids enjoy the children's activities, or try your luck at the quilt raffle. However you choose to spend your day, you'll be helping improve a life. The Julian Center helps women seeking freedom from abuse.

#### **Warm up that bocce ball throwing arm.**

If you're going to visit Clinton during the 40<sup>th</sup> Little Italy Festival (765-832-7254) September 2-5, 2005, be prepared to eat, drink, and play bocce. Or at least watch this traditional Italian game. Many Italian immigrants have called Clinton home, and this food-filled, fun-filled festival salutes their home country. Along with bocce instruction and the state bocce

tournament, the weekend's activities include grape stomping, spaghetti eating, pasta throwing, children's carnival rides, games, a craft barn, train rides, music, fireworks, and dancing. See an authentic 40' gondola, costume contests, and four museums. And take your chances on a raffle for a trip to Italy!

### **Crunchy, munchy fun.**

Quick. Think of a person whose name is synonymous with popcorn. If you thought Orville Redenbacher, then you're thinking of the Valparaiso native who inspired the annual Valparaiso Popcorn Festival (219-464-8332). Mark your calendar for September 10, 2005 to enjoy more than 500 food and craft booths, kids' games and rides, a 5-mile run/5K walk (known as the "Popcorn Panic"), live entertainment, a hot air balloon show, and the nation's only popcorn parade.

### **How's your rebellious look?**

James Dean may not have starred in a lot of movies, but to film buffs, fans, and his hometown of Fairmount, he made a tremendous impact on Hollywood and the world. In fact, in his first major film role, "East of Eden", he was nominated for an academy award. The local boy who made it big before his untimely death in a car accident is honored at Fairmount Museum Days/Remembering James Dean Festival (765-948-4555) in Fairmount September 23-25, 2005. Events include a large car show, a parade, museum tours, entertainment, a carnival, crafts, food, his motorcycles, and a James Dean look-alike contest.

### **Part history lesson; part entertainment.**

Angle Mounds State Historic Site in Evansville (812-853-3956) was home to Native Americans of the Mississippian culture from 1100 to 1450 A.D. Today, Angel Mounds is recognized as one of the best preserved prehistoric Native American Sites in the United States. During Native American Days from September 23-25, 2005 additional activities provide further insight into Native American traditions. Those activities include an Indian market with 25 vendors, an intertribal dance circle, northern and southern drum, and a free children's area. Food is also available.

### **Fall fun for a Hoosier Poet.**

In his poem "When the frost is on the punkin," Greenfield native James Whitcomb Riley wrote, "...the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze / Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airy autumn days." So it's fitting that the festival honoring the beloved Hoosier poet, Riley Festival (317-462-2141), takes place in the fall, in his hometown, to honor his birthday. Taking place from October 6-9, 2005, the festival includes a Parade of Flowers, the Americana Riley Festival Parade, and more than 450 booths with home arts, fine arts, photography and more.

**Annual favorites.**

Some Indiana festivals have been around so long they don't need a description, but they might need a clarification on dates. Mark your calendar to make sure you don't miss these perennial celebrations:

Three Rivers Festival (260-426-5556) in Fort Wayne, July 9-17

Indiana State Fair (317-927-7500) in Indianapolis, August 10-21

Marshall County Blueberry Festival (888-936-5020) in Plymouth, September 2-5, 2005

Chautauqua of the Arts (812-265-5080) in Greensburg, September 17-18

Huntingburg Herbstfest (812-683-2211), September 22-25

Feast of the Hunters' Moon (765-476-8411) in West Lafayette, September 24-25

Parke County Covered Bridge Festival (765-569-5226), October 14-23.